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FRANK F. NAVARRETE
DIRECTOR

August 19, 2005

FCC Chairman Kevin Martin
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

I am writing on behalf of Suzanne Mencer to address an item on the Commission's agenda that could considerably advance public safety interests. Let me first congratulate you on your demonstrated commitment to public safety as evidenced by your recent E-911 order – your signal that public safety is of paramount importance is significantly appreciated in our community

Fortunately, we understand that you may have another opportunity to advance public safety interests. Specifically, we understand that the Commission is determining whether to divide the remaining one-third of the two GHz mobile satellite service (MSS) spectrum between two remaining satellite operators authorized to provide MSS in two GHz band; ICO Satellite Services (ICO) and TMI Communications and Company Limited Partnership (TMI). We strongly support this outcome for several reasons that are important to the public safety community which we represent.

First responders and law enforcement officials are in desperate need of affordable, ubiquitous, redundant, and interoperable communications systems. Fortunately, there exists a technological option that offers this promise – the use of satellite spectrum along with ancillary terrestrial capacity to offer a full range of communications services. However, providers in this space require sufficient spectrum to attract the necessary investment to develop and deploy powerful satellites while also offering affordable handsets due to scope and scale. Accordingly, if the Commission has an opportunity to allocate the remaining S band spectrum to the two entities that have already demonstrated a commitment to compete and offer these services, it should do so as soon as possible.

Rural areas in particular would benefit greatly from this result, as coverage in remote regions would be enhanced while the cost of handsets would contemporaneously come down. Most importantly, the first responder community would have available a redundant communications network which would be protected should terrestrial wireless services fail during a terrorist event or natural disaster.

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We strongly urge you to move expeditiously on the pending item referenced above. We thank you for your consideration of our views, and we commend you again for your demonstrated commitment to public safety.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Frank F. Navarrete", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Frank F. Navarrete, Director
Office of Homeland Security

FFN/sm